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Appl. No. 09/729,426

Response to Office Action dated April 21, 2005

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject patent application are respectfully requested.

For the Examiner's convenient reference, a complete listing of the pending claims of this application is set forth above.

Claims 1-4, 21, 25-27 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as allegedly being "obvious" over Hisatomi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,661,933) in view of Takahashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,424,429). For the reasons set forth below, Applicants traverse this rejection.

With respect to claim 1, Hisatomi et al. discloses a "process of fetching out an image data." See, e.g., col. 9, lines 56-57. In this process, a document ID is obtained from a marked sheet. The document ID is supplied to a document image managing means 103, which finds a storage location corresponding to the document ID and then reads out a corresponding image file from the storage location. Hisatomi et al. however does not disclose or suggest the concept of "summary information" as specified in claim 1 and thus does not disclose or suggest the "double check" feature of this claim in which the document is output based on both an identification number and summary information.

The office acknowledges the deficiency of Hisatomi et al. in this regard and relies on Takahashi et al. to purportedly remedy this deficiency. Takahashi et al. discloses a system in which backups of copied documents are saved and can be accessed at a later time. More specifically, Takahashi et al. is mainly concerned with the input of documents into an infinite memory server (IMS) -- there is in fact only limited discussion of the output of documents. Takahashi et al. describes appended data, which can include keywords, associated with the stored documents. When documents are stored in the IMS, appended data can be extracted from an input image using OCR, and is used to cross-reference the stored documents. See, e.g., Takahashi et al., col. 22, lines 1-18.

Applicants notes that such appended data is extracted from an image by OCR only during the inputting of documents to the system. Regarding the output of documents, Takahashi et al. describes only that output is achieved by displaying thumbnails and the user judging which

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documents (corresponding to the thumbnails) should be outputted. *See, e.g.,* Takahashi et al., col. 15, line 58 to col. 17, line 27 and col. 21, lines 31-48.

Takahashi et al. suggests that keywords can be used to retrieve documents. *See, e.g.,* Takahashi et al., col. 23, lines 44-53. However, such retrieval is via the server, which does not extract information from images. *See, e.g.,* Takahashi et al., col. 20, line 61 to col. 21, line 14 and Figure 6. Using keywords to extract documents still apparently results in thumbnails being presented for final user selection. In any event, the use of keywords does not correspond to extracting summary information from an image, as recited in claim 1. There is no teaching or suggestion in Takahashi et al. of extracting summary information from an image for use in outputting a document as claimed.

More specifically, col. 15, line 58 et seq. of Takahashi et al. describes that when a user requests document data, the CPU outputs document data as a thumbnail image on a display arranged in a calendar format. In this context, Takahashi et al. describes the use of "appended data" which is stored along with the document data and can be used to assist in identification of the document data. *See, e.g.,* col. 16, lines 9-27; col. 17, line 47 to col. 18, line 9; and col. 20, lines 59-61. The appended data of Takahashi et al. is stored along with the document data and is displayed to the user to assist in identifying a particular document. *See, e.g.,* col. 16, lines 9 et seq. ("Furthermore, the list shown in FIG. 23 can successively be displayed from the upper side in the left thereof by selecting a retrieval button 64 on the screen with the calendar-view format 60 thereon of the display 44 so that the processing for the documentation data can be checked, and when a copy button 64a is selected for confirming contents such as the type of document data having been copied, the list 66 of appended data such as a title and keywords of the document data is outputted for display so that the data can be confirmed ..."). However, as stated above, these keywords are not obtained from an image as claimed.

Consequently, at best, the proposed combination of Hisatomi et al. and Takahashi et al. might result in document retrieval based on matching an ID mark, such as a two-dimensional bar code extracted from an image, and on user selection of an image from a presentation of thumbnails, possibly with associated keywords.

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For at least these reasons, the proposed combination of Hisatomi et al. and Takahashi et al. would not have resulted in receiving an image, extracting summary information and outputting a document based on the extracted summary information. Therefore, claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-4 are believed to be allowable over the proposed combination.

In addition, the dependent claims include additional features that provide independent bases for patentability. For example, with respect to claim 3, neither Hisatomi et al. nor Takahashi et al. discloses that the summary information comprises a partial image. In this regard, the office action references col. 36, lines 56-67 of Takahashi et al. However, the "image data" mentioned in this portion of Takahashi et al. refers to the data read from a document for copying. Thus, this image data does not correspond to, or suggest, summary information that comprises a partial document as claimed.

Claim 21 is directed to a recording medium that stores a program that extracts summary information from an image and judges whether the extracted summary information is correct with respect to an obtained document in order to determine whether to output the obtained document. For reasons similar to those advanced with respect to claim 1, Applicants submit that the proposed combination of Hisatomi et al. and Takahashi et al. is likewise deficient with respect to claim 21.

Claim 25 is directed to a document management device in which an extracting section extracts summary information from an image received by an input section and a judging section uses the extracted summary information to determine whether to output a retrieved document. For reasons similar to those advanced with respect to claim 1, Applicants submit that the proposed combination of Hisatomi et al. and Takahashi et al. is likewise deficient with respect to claim 25.

Claims 26, 27 and 32 depend from claim 25 and the proposed Hisatomi et al.-Takahashi et al. combination fails to disclose the subject matter of these claims for at least the reasons advanced with respect to claim 25.

In addition, these dependent claims recite subject matter not taught or suggested by the proposed combination. For example, claim 32 calls for the image received by the input section to comprise an image document request form on which an identification number and summary information are printed. Nothing in either Hisatomi et al. or Takahashi et al. discloses a request

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form having summary information as claimed. For this additional and independent reason, claim 32 is believed to be allowable.

Claims 5-12 and 28-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as allegedly being "obvious" over the proposed Hisatomi et al.-Takahashi et al. combination, in further view of Jeran et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,628,412). Jeran et al. is cited for its disclosure of printing information such as a version number or a code for authorization on a document. When the document is later scanned, the information can be used to track the document or to determine whether a particular person has permission to copy the document. These teachings are in a different context than the subject matter of claims 5-12 and 28-31. In Jeran et al., the information is associated with a document in a person's possession and is used to track the document or to determine whether that document can be copied. In the context of claim 8, for example, the presence/absence of approval information is used to determine whether to output a document. Accordingly, in addition to failing to remedy the deficiencies of Hisatomi et al. and Takahashi et al. in connection with the claims from which claims 5-12 and 28-31 depend, Jeran et al. fails to render obvious the subject matter of these claims.

With respect to claim 11, the office action does not identify any portions of Hisatomi et al., Takahashi et al. or Jeran et al. that allegedly discloses or suggests the concept of prohibiting output when the image received by the input section includes predetermined information and approval information. Applicants respectfully request that the portion(s) of these documents relied upon for this rejection be identified or that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as allegedly being "obvious" over the proposed Hisatomi et al.-Takahashi et al. combination, in further view of Fukushima et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,293,256) and Dieterman et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,560,704). The document management system of claims 23 and 24 each includes a document management device along the lines of claim 1 and thus the Hisatomi et al.-Takahashi et al. combination is lacking with respect to this subject matter for the reasons set forth above. Fukushima et al. and Dieterman et al. at least fail to remedy the deficiencies of Hisatomi et al. and Takahashi et al. in this regard and claims 23 and 24 are believed to be allowable for at least this reason.

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The pending claims are believed to be allowable and favorable office action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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